

## PostCom News Archives October 2017

### National News

#### October 31

**Post&Parcel:** US retailer Best Buy has announced that it is expanding its same-day delivery coverage, as well as offering free shipping over the holiday season. In a [statement](#) issued yesterday (30 October), Best Buy said: “After expanding same-day delivery to more than 25 metro areas this fall, we’ve now expanded the service to more than 40 U.S. metro areas.” The service is powered by Best Buy’s third-party provider GEODIS. In areas where the service is available, customers can place orders up to 3pm local time for delivery by 9pm that night, for a cost of \$5.99. Same-day delivery is available seven days a week – although Sunday deadlines are an hour earlier.

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#### October 30

**FederalNewsRadio:** The federal workforce is facing major headwinds from President Donald Trump’s administration and certain lawmakers that may soon devolve into an outright hostile environment, experts say. They point to potential retirement cuts looming in Congress, investigations into reassignments at the Department of Interior, and potentially devastating budget cuts at the Environmental Protection Agency as examples, and outlined a few overarching challenges feds will have to endure or overcome in the near future.

**Post&Parcel:** A new report from GlobalData has argued that retailers must invest in delivery saver schemes to capture shopper spend. The new report, [‘Delivery Saver Schemes in the UK – 2017’](#), found that department stores and traditional clothing & footwear retailers are losing market share to online pureplay retailers – but adopting delivery saver schemes could help them recapture some of this business. According to the GlobalData report, 22.2% of online shoppers are subscribed to a non-food delivery saver scheme and 29.0% are subscribed to a food & grocery delivery saver scheme, with Amazon Prime and the Tesco delivery saver being the most popular schemes offered by non-food and food & grocery retailers.

**MotleyFool:** Recent developments show just how serious Amazon is about the last mile. The company already has a massive logistics and delivery operation that is continually expanding. Several months ago, Amazon quietly launched a program called The Hub, which installs lockers in multi-tenant dwellings like apartment buildings, condos, and complexes. Bloomberg is reporting that the company is experimenting with a program called Seller Flex, where Amazon picks up goods from the warehouses of third-party sellers and delivers them to customers. Wal-Mart has also acquired New York-based delivery service Parcel for an estimated \$10 million. The company handles same-day shipping for meal-kit companies and online retailers in the Big Apple. This will allow Wal-Mart to expand expedited deliveries for itself and for Jet.com. Wal-Mart also gets Parcel’s automated delivery platform, providing the company a foothold in an important market and the technology to expand. Amazon has long worn the mantle of e-commerce leader, and Wal-Mart remains the world’s largest retailer. The two are locked in an epic struggle to chart the future of retail sales. While Amazon moves into brick-and-mortar retail with bookstores and its purchase of Whole Foods, Wal-Mart is shoring up its e-commerce operations, with new delivery options and numerous acquisitions of online retailers. It’s a classic tale: Wal-Mart wants to become Amazon before Amazon can become Wal-Mart.

**TameBay:** United Parcel Service (UPS) has said that a variety of its charges, including those surrounding packages and air freight will be changing. And the shift is upwards. As they say in their announcement: “Effective December 24, 2017, the rates for UPS® Ground, UPS Air and International services, as well as UPS Air Freight rates within and between the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico, will increase an average net 4.9%. UPS continues to make investments in the speed, scope and coverage of our transportation network in order to support our customers’ growth and service needs. Rate increases support ongoing expansion and capabilities enhancements, while UPS maintains the high service levels customers expect.”

**FederalNewsRadio:** Ninety percent of the federal workforce will be hit hard if the on-again-off-again GOP plan to trim contributions to 401(k) plans becomes law. The plan, which President Donald Trump first endorsed, then denounced in a tweet, would reduce the amount of pre-tax money that people can put into a 401(k) plan. Over a long career, the diminished contributions could drastically reduce the standard of living people have in retirement. Federal and postal workers are among the biggest fans of the optional 401(k) plan offered by many employers. The government program — the Thrift Savings Plan — is extremely popular with workers. Because the TSP is portable, workers and members of the military who leave federal service can take the money with them to beef up their retirement nest egg in another job.

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#### October 28

**TownHall:** So, let’s get this straight: The Postal Service’s [most profitable product](#) is delivering first-class mail to our mailboxes. But demand is down because we stopped reading magazines, started paying our bills online and now write emails instead of letters, etc. What should the Postal Service do? Lower prices and use the advantages conferred by its huge volume and vast delivery network to win back some customers? Or raise prices on captive customers to cover losses elsewhere? If you guessed No. 1, your faith in the wisdom of government is touching if not realistic. If you guessed No. 2, you’re understanding of postal leadership’s thinking is up to date. In recent years, it has attempted to explain away its losing strategies by saying when it comes to “controllable income” – money the Postal Service would earn if it didn’t have to pay what it considered to be exorbitant costs to pre-fund its retiree and pension benefits – it was doing far better than anyone knew. But in the second quarter of this year, the Postal Service [posted a controllable loss](#)

*of \$587 million.* There is no escaping it now – the current plan is not working. Yet the Postal Service *pays its workers twice what competitors pay and provides generous benefits packages.*

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#### **October 27**

**TruckingInfo:** The U.S. Postal Service has begun using a virtual reality-based simulator to train drivers in its Brooklyn, New York, and Tampa, Florida, districts, according to the company that provides the equipment. The USPS, which implemented the program in 2015, has seen a 7% reduction in accidents in New York and has reduced crashes in Tampa as well, according to Virtual Driver Interactive (VDI), which provided the systems. The simulator-based training program, known as Virtual HD, has also been used by UPS.

**CNBC:** United Parcel Service expects a handful of extra delivery days will help it smash shipping records for the 2017 holiday season. The Atlanta-based shipping company forecasts holiday delivery of about 750 million packages, the company said in a press release Thursday. That's a 7 percent increase from its prediction last year, when the company expected to ship 700 million packages during its busiest season. UPS also expects to ship more than 30 million packages every day for 17 of the 21 shipping days before Christmas — 510 million packages or more in less than four work weeks.

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#### **October 26**

**PRNewswire:** Spartan Motors, Inc. a global leader in specialty chassis and vehicle design, manufacturing and assembly, today announced that its Spartan Fleet Vehicles and Services (FVS) business unit — which encompasses the Utilimaster go-to-market brand — has been awarded a \$214 million contract from the United States Postal Service (USPS) for more than 2,000 cargo body fleet vehicles. The contract represents the largest revenue contract in the history of Spartan Motors. The order from the USPS includes a combination of Cab Over Engine (COE) and Cab Behind Engine (CBE) Utilimaster truck bodies in a variety of 18-foot and 24-foot configurations. The USPS order will be built and delivered over the span of two years, with an option for additional quantities delivered over a third contract year. Production will begin in Q2 of 2018.

**GovExec:** The U.S. Postal Service will finally see its payments into the federal employee pension account calculated using assumptions from its workforce specifically, rather than the federal workforce as a whole. The calculation has long been a sticking point at the mailing agency. USPS leadership has for years argued its payments into the Federal Employees Retirement System and the Civil Service Retirement System have been too pricey due to the difference between the demographics of its employees and the rest of government. Salary growth and workforce characteristics of the Postal Service differ significantly from those of other federal organizations. Postal workers generally remain in a similar pay grade throughout their careers while non-postal feds generally see their salaries increase significantly.

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#### **October 25**

**CNNMoney:** Amazon says it has a safe way for you to allow delivery drivers inside your home, even when you're not there. The service is called Amazon Key and launches November 8 for Prime members. You buy a kit that includes an Amazon security camera, the Cloud Cam, and a compatible smart lock. The kit starts at \$249.99. You order something for delivery and click the "in-home" shipping option. When the delivery driver arrives, Amazon verifies the address and delivery time and allows him or her into your home. You can watch from your phone as the camera records the whole thing. Amazon says the delivery driver will not be given an access code or key. The service isn't just for deliveries. Amazon says you can also use it to let family and friends into your house when you're not home. And it will work for certain services like home cleaners, pet sitters and dog walkers. Amazon Key will be available in 37 U.S. cities to start, and Amazon says it will add more.

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#### **October 24**

**ReadingEagle:** In San Juan's post offices, it feels lately as though all of America has started sending care packages. Thousands upon thousands of parcels have finally started pouring in on flights from the mainland. They are stuffed into giant silver containers, off-loaded at a special cargo area at the Luis Munoz Marin International Airport and driven to two processing facilities. But since Hurricane Maria cut a terrible path across Puerto Rico on Sept. 20, the logistics of handling all the packages have been daunting. U.S. Postal Service inspectors from as far away as Seattle have been flown in to help keep the cargo area secure from potential thieves. The backlog of packages is so great that the local post office wants to hire 100 temporary employees to help sort them. Mail carriers, many already enduring tough living conditions at home, cannot access unsafe areas in the island's interior. Traveling any of the routes is a slow process because post-storm traffic across Puerto Rico is often gridlocked. And then there are the packages themselves — many are just too heavy.

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#### **October 23**

**TheHill:** In light of the depths of our nation's opioid epidemic and overall rate of drug abuse, it is clear that longstanding and effective solutions to promote recovery will be needed. At the state level, thankfully, numerous ideas have been put forward: everything from establishing new taskforces to examine the problem, to acquiring federal grants to combat the crisis, to even direct funding from state leaders, like Gov. Chris Christie in *New Jersey*, who has committed \$200 million, along with a similar plan by Gov. Rick Scott in *Florida*. In short, the patchwork efforts commenced by the states must be supplemented by judicious solutions passed by Congress and signed by the president. The key mechanism to help make these laws effective is to expand requirements for shippers from outside the United States, when using the U.S. Postal Service, to provide electronic data detailing the contents of incoming packages with our federal authorities. Instituting this would be a necessary and long-overdue step in fashioning

consistencies across the international shipping world, and bring USPS up to code with private carriers, who must submit advance security data through the Air Cargo Advance Screening system.

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### October 20

**Linns:** When it comes to their mail, most people want it yesterday. Which is another way of saying speed of delivery matters. The United States Postal Service, keenly aware of this, regularly measures how quickly first-class letters and other types of mail move from origin to destination. Results, which the USPS terms "[Service Performance Results](#)," are reported quarterly. Since 1990, U.S. Postal Service has contracted with a third party vendor to measure First-Class Mail service performance independently and objectively via the External First-Class Mail Measurement System (EXFC). "IBM is currently under contract with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to conduct independent studies using participant panels, to measure how the USPS performs from the customer's point of view," it says on the reportez.com website, which explains how volunteers can sign up to participate in what IBM calls the "Transit-Time Measurement System." IBM maintains and operates the TTMS for the Postal Service.

**AirCargoWorld:** The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is following in the steps – or in this case, the wheels – of integrators like UPS, FedEx and DHL by testing an autonomous delivery vehicle on rural routes, in partnership with the University of Michigan. If successful, USPS expects to deploy the vehicles on 28,000 rural routes by 2025. In addition to the usual AV roadblocks, including regulatory concerns and public perception of AVs, a potential logistics hurdle with the widespread introduction of AVs is what USPS calls "the last-meter problem," involving the act of transferring items from an AV to the customer, which often calls for the customer to directly retrieve items from the AV. USPS sees itself as a potential answer to this problem for other logistics providers with plans to automate, where post offices could serve as hubs for third-party AVs to drop off packages for local delivery.

**Post&Parcel:** Amazon has been granted another drone-related patent from the US Patent and Trademark Office (UPTO). This time, it has come up with an idea for a drone that can recharge electric vehicles – while they are on the move. The [patent](#), which was published by the USPTO on 3 October, shows a number of methods by which the drones can be attached to electric vehicles. After it has finished recharging the electric vehicle, the drone flies back to a drone station – where its own batteries can be recharged ahead of its next call-out. The average time between charges has been one of the limiting factors for electric vehicle usage. But has also been an issue for flying drones too. Indeed, drones have an even more limited battery capacity – so this is not a perfect solution.

**GovExec:** The Senate voted 51-49 Thursday night to approve its fiscal 2018 budget resolution, following a lengthy session of debate on proposed amendments. The legislation ([H. Con. Res. 71](#)) as approved by the Senate Budget Committee, sets the stage for Republican efforts to reform the federal tax code, and it orders the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to slash \$1 billion in spending over the next decade. But it does not recommend any cuts to federal employee benefits as part of those savings. The [House version of the budget](#) plan approved earlier this month, however, calls for much steeper cuts to government spending, including a provision instructing the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee to find \$32 billion in savings over the next 10 years.

**RetailDiva:** The mere existence of a printed Sears catalog would be just as alien to today's consumers. The retailer axed the paper catalog in the 1990s and Sears is hardly alone. But the printed catalog isn't gone. In fact by some measures, in some sectors of retail, it's thriving. Retailers still mail billions of catalogs every year, and tens of millions of consumers still make purchases based, at least in part, on images and copy printed in catalogs that find their way to mailboxes. Today the paper catalog has become primarily a marketing tool — one of special importance during the holiday season. And for many, it remains an important sales channel. The most sophisticated retailers are continuously working to build a seamless omnichannel operation and experience that uses catalogs, websites and physical stores seamlessly and interchangeably to help customers shop and make purchases.

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### October 19

**MediaPost:** Local advertising in the U.S. will increase 7.6% in 2018, up from 0.4% in 2017, according to new data from Borrell Associates. Estimates for 2018 U.S. local ad expenditures highlight billboards as one of the only traditional media to show growth in the coming year as the sector moves toward digital, Gordon Borrell, founder of Borrell Associates, said during a webinar Wednesday. Compared with 2017, rising sectors in 2018 include telemarketing at 1.4%, out-of-home, 2.8%, local TV, 14.6%, and online, 16.8%. Directories will fall by 10.1% in 2018 compared with the prior year. Newspapers will fall 10.3%; while other print will decline 7%; radio, 3.0%; direct mail, 2.8%; cable TV, 2%; and cinema remaining flat.

**CBSLocal:** Among the many services still trying to get to normal in Puerto Rico is mail delivery, so the U.S. Postal Service has put out a call for volunteers from among its employees. Limited mail delivery has been restored on the island, and most people have to pick up their mail at a post office about after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria hit the island. To try and get delivery back to normal, the U.S. Postal Service has asked employees across the country to volunteer for 30-day stints working in Puerto Rico. "They'll get paid the regular salary, overtime pay that's applicable, and that sort of thing; but as far as getting there, and having per diem or housing costs paid for, that'll be up to the employee," spokesman Tim Norman said. "It's strictly a voluntary thing, so they'll need to make their own accommodations wherever they can stay."

**U.S. News:** Postal workers and supporters have marched in front of Boston's main downtown post office to protest job cutbacks that have led to long lines and delivery delays around New England. Scott Hoffman, president of the American Postal Workers Union's Boston chapter, says about a hundred people rallied on Wednesday afternoon. Hoffman says hundreds of postal vacancies in the Boston area have gone unfilled.

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### October 17

**miBiz: Spartan Motors Inc.** has been awarded a contract valued at more than \$214 million to produce cargo delivery vans for the **U.S. Postal Service**. Executives from Charlotte-based Spartan Motors announced the deal during an analyst and investor

presentation Oct. 12. Spartan Motors expects to produce the Postal Service vehicles in 2018 and 2019, according to a filing with federal securities regulators. The cargo vans will be designed into two types — cab over engine and cab behind engine — and with 18-foot and 24-foot cargo body sizes, according to a document from the Federal Budget Office.

**WTKR:** The United States Postal Service has announced the 2017 holiday mailing and shipping deadlines for domestic, international and military services. To ensure timely delivery of cards, letters and packages within the United States by Dec. 25, the Postal Service recommends that customers ship their items by the following dates:

**Mail-by Dates (Domestic Services)** Dec. 14 – Standard Post *Ground service for less-than-urgent deliveries and oversized packages.* Dec. 19 – First Class Mail *Service for standard-sized, single-piece envelopes and small packages weighing up to 13 ounces with delivery in 3 business days or less.* Dec. 20 – Priority Mail *Domestic service in 1, 2, or 3 business days based on where the package starts and where it's being sent. Includes variety of Flat Rate options.* Dec. 22 – Priority Mail Express Complete details on [Mailing and Shipping services](#) can be found on [usps.com](#).

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#### **October 16**

**SupplyChainDive:** The United States Postal Service (USPS) will work with the University of Michigan on an autonomous mail delivery truck, [American Shipper](#) reported last week. The USPS intends to introduce a swarm of the small self-driving trucks on rural routes across the country by 2025. In one possible scenario, a postal worker would sit behind the wheel, sorting mail and doing other tasks as the truck moves along the established route. Rural areas are first for consideration due to the lower accident rate as a result of less traffic.

**PostalNews:** The Social Security Administration [announced Friday](#) that next year's Social Security cost of living adjustment (COLA) will be 2.0%. That means an increase of \$25 per month for the average beneficiary. According to the nonpartisan Kaiser Foundation, however, this will not be enough to offset the rise in Medicare Part B premium costs for 2018. Coverage for Medicare Part B is optional, but 91 percent of Medicare beneficiaries are signed up for it. The program covers physicians' care, outpatient care, certain medical equipment, laboratory tests, some health home services, and other care for patients. According to a Senior Citizens League study, retirees have lost one-third of their buying power since 2000 because COLA increases haven't been able to catch up with skyrocketing health care and housing costs. Researchers expect Part B premiums to increase an average of 5.4 percent each year between 2017 and 2024.

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#### **October 13**

**BLS:** The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) rose 0.5 percent in September on a seasonally adjusted basis, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Over the last 12 months, the all items index rose 2.2 percent. The gasoline index increased 13.1 percent in September and accounted for about three-fourths of the seasonally adjusted all items increase. Other major energy component indexes were mixed, and the food index rose slightly. The index for all items less food and energy increased 0.1 percent in September. The all items index rose 2.2 percent for the 12 months ending September; the 12-month change has been accelerating since it was 1.6 percent in June.

**PostalTimes:** The House by voice vote approved a bill Wednesday that would make it easier for participants in the federal government's 401(k)-style retirement program to manage their investments. The TSP Modernization Act ([H.R.3031](#)), introduced by Reps. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., and Mark Meadows, R-N.C., would allow federal employees and retirees to make multiple age-based withdrawals from their Thrift Savings Plan accounts and remain eligible for partial withdrawals after they leave government as well. Additionally, those who have left government would be able to make multiple partial post-separation withdrawals. The bill also would allow those receiving monthly payments to change the amount of their annuity at any time, instead of only once per year. Participants could change the frequency of payments as well.

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#### **October 12**

**Gao.gov:** The Universal Postal Union (UPU), a specialized agency of the United Nations, created the terminal dues system so that designated postal operators in member countries could compensate designated postal operators in other countries for delivering mail in those countries. GAO found that it is not possible to quantify the financial effects of the terminal dues system on various U.S. mail stakeholders because the data needed to conduct such an analysis are not readily available. However, stakeholders GAO spoke with and literature GAO reviewed described differing impacts of the terminal dues system on U.S. stakeholders. [View Report](#)

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#### **October 11**

**CNBC:** Amazon has almost perfected speedy delivery to your home. Now the company is working to make sure your packages get inside the front door, or even into your car. The company is in advanced talks to forge a partnership with Phrame, a maker of smart license plates that allow items to be delivered to a car's trunk, according to a person with knowledge of the potential deal. Phrame's product fits around a license plate and contains a secure box that holds the keys to the car. Users unlock the box with their smartphone, and can grant access to others — such as delivery drivers — remotely. At the same time, Amazon is developing a smart doorbell device that would give delivery drivers one-time access to a person's home to drop off items, said two people familiar with the matter. The sources asked not to be named because the discussions are confidential.

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#### **October 10**

**ThisIsInsider:** Costco is rolling out new delivery options in an effort to take on Amazon. On Thursday, the retailer announced that Costco Grocery will offer two-day delivery on nonperishable items, like cookies, cereal, and canned foods, starting this week. Delivery will be free on orders more than \$75. Additionally, the retailer partnered with Instacart for same-day delivery of all online

grocery items. The option to have online groceries delivered from Costco in as little as an hour is available at 376 of its 514 US locations, with plans to expand to more stores in the coming months. The new delivery options come at a time when e-commerce is exploding in the grocery industry, with retailers like Walmart and Kroger making major investments in their online businesses. Amazon is seen as a growing threat, especially with the e-commerce giant's acquisition of Whole Foods in August.

**IPTheInternet:** The US Postal Service has reclaimed 30 infringing domain names following an Alternative Dispute Resolution Forum Uniform Domain-Name Dispute Resolutions Policy (UDRP) decision. According to the US Postal Service, the domain names, which all contained the words 'US postal address', prefixed by the word 'change', were "confusingly similar" to its trademark for US Postal. The registrants of the domains did not respond to the US Postal Service's allegations.

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#### October 9

**Fedscoop:** An inspector general's report says the U.S. Postal Service has not fully implemented a federally mandated program designed to protect its computer systems from insider attacks. *The partially-redacted report* examines the agency's efforts to secure information deemed important to national security from potential misuse by employees, contractors or others with access to its network. The report does not detail the nature of the national security information on the USPS network, but it says that the agency is not the originator of the information and only "a limited number of employees" have access to national security systems with electronic and hard-copy information. USPS officials had not dedicated full-time resources to implementing some minimum protection standards laid out in the National Insider Threat Policy, the report says, and there were physical and security access breakdowns at facilities with national security information.

**Trucks.com:** The first photos of a prototype mail delivery truck indicate that the U.S. Postal Service may be going electric. The photos were taken recently by a Trucks.com reader and electric vehicle enthusiast as a postal service worker delivered mail in Leesburg, Va., about 30 miles northwest of Washington, D.C. The truck appears to be a prototype undergoing road tests in the *USPS' Next Generation Delivery Vehicle Program*. It most likely was the offering from a team that includes truck body manufacturer VT Hackney Inc. and electric truck company Workhorse Group Inc., which make up one of the five final entries in the contest to build the postal service's next delivery truck. The truck delivering mail in Virginia has an attention-grabbing profile that features a low-slung aerodynamic hood, oversized windows for increased visibility and an upright stance for the cargo box. Painted with the postal service eagle logo and red, white and blue livery, the right-hand drive truck was clearly an electric vehicle and made almost no noise as it drove through a Virginia neighborhood.

**BusinessInsider:** With the Puerto Rico power grid shredded by Hurricane Maria, the U.S. Postal Service has taken the place of cellphone service at the forefront of island communications. Only 15 percent of electrical power has been restored since the storm bludgeoned the U.S. territory on Sept. 20, but 99 of Puerto Rico's 128 post offices are delivering mail. Tents have taken the place of post offices wrecked by Maria. Mail carriers gather information on sick and elderly residents in far-flung parts where hospitals have closed. Data is fed into the Federal Emergency Management Agency disaster relief office in San Juan so medical attention can be provided.

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#### October 6

**Barrons:** How much impact could **Amazon.com**'s new delivery service have on **United Parcel Services** and **FedEx**? That is the question swirling about after news broke yesterday that the e-commerce giant is testing a delivery service called Seller Flex that picks up packages from third-party sellers on Amazon's web site and delivers them to consumers. Some analysts are warning that Amazon's new venture could put pressure on delivery rates and steal business from the transport giants. Yet **Credit Suisse analyst Allison Landry** has shrugged it off as "more noise than anything of substance," arguing that FedEx and UPS handle residential deliveries for only a small subset of Amazon third-party sellers.

**FederalNewsRadio:** The 6.1 percent average increase in federal-postal-retiree health plan premiums coming in 2018 is tiny, compared to what's happening in the private sector. FEHBP stands for the *Federal Employees Health Benefits Program*. It covers 8.3 million current and retired feds, their spouses, children and in some cases ex-spouses, too. The FEHBP next year will offer 245 plan choices, most local Health Maintenance Organizations, and a choice of 15-to-17 national plans with a wide range of premiums. Uncle Sam picks up an average of 72 percent of the total premium for nonpostal federal workers and retirees, regardless of which plan they pick, or their annual salary or annuity. That looks increasingly good when compared to the "other" federal health program for people who do not work for the federal government. In that other plan — the *Affordable Care Act*, aka "Obamacare" — premiums for many in the private sector will be going up 50 percent or more next year, according to the New York Times.

**Reuters:** U.S. package delivery service UPS has re-established shipping to the bulk of Puerto Rico's postal areas, the company said on Thursday, although power outages and blocked roads continue to hamper deliveries. "We are pleased to begin operations again in Puerto Rico, though the situation is dynamic," UPS Americas Region President Romaine Seguin said in a statement. The company said freight services were now available to 149 of the island's 176 zip codes and added it would offer a hurricane aid discount to individual customers.

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#### October 5

**Bloomberg:** Amazon.com Inc. is experimenting with a new delivery service intended to make more products available for free two-day delivery and relieve overcrowding in its warehouses, according to two people familiar with the plan, which will push the online retailer deeper into functions handled by longtime partners United Parcel Service Inc. and FedEx Corp. Amazon is calling the project Seller Flex, one person said. The service began on a trial basis this year in West Coast states with a broader rollout planned in 2018, the people said. Amazon will oversee pickup of packages from warehouses of third-party merchants selling goods on Amazon.com

and their delivery to customers' homes, the people said -- work that is now often handled by UPS and FedEx. Amazon could still use these couriers for delivery, but the company will decide how a package is sent instead of leaving it up to the seller.

**Post&Parcel:** UPS has revealed that it is using two new technologies that it says will help speed up the training for many of the 95,000 seasonal workers the company is hiring for this year's holiday shopping season. These include an update to the Mobile Delivery App which the seasonal delivery workers will have their on their smart phones. This will feature most of the functionality of the handheld DIADs (Delivery Information Acquisition Devices) that UPS delivery drivers carry. The second technology -- called Dynamic Sort Instruction -- uses Bluetooth audio to tell workers in sorting facilities where to route packages. Employees carry a device about the size of a cell phone and wear ear buds to receive processing instructions as they scan packages. This technology eliminates the need for workers to memorize hundreds of postal codes and other service-level details.

**PostalPost:** Health insurance premiums paid by federal employees and retirees will increase 6.1 percent on average in 2018, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announced Wednesday. Open season, when individuals can shop around and choose health insurance plans, runs from Nov. 13 through Dec. 11 for the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. It is the nation's largest employer-sponsored health insurance program, covering 8.3 million people.

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#### **October 4**

**Deadtree:** The U.S. Postal Service recently made a quiet change that will cause retirement to look sweeter for thousands of postal workers. Pension estimates the USPS provides to employees who are considering retirement now include an amount for the FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) supplement, reports Don Cheney, an APWU official with a long history of helping fellow union members understand their retirement benefits. The Postal Service has not announced the change. The supplement is meant to take the place of Social Security until USPS retirees turn 62, when actual Social Security payments kick in. Usually, a postal worker needs to be at least 55 with 30 years of service to qualify for the supplement. About 85,000 postal workers have 30 or more years of service.

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#### **October 3**

**PostalNews:** From the US Postal Service ([click here to view the original Post article](#)) We consider any allegations of the mishandling of mail very seriously. We take issue that the OIG subjectively selected eight plants out of our postal network of more than 250. It also mischaracterized our plants as rural or urban entities. The OIG's flawed methodology results in conclusions that are both inaccurate and susceptible to misinterpretation. What the OIG found in its August 10th report was that some employees did not properly record delayed mail and needed additional training on that issue. We agreed with that conclusion and will complete employee training on the proper procedures for recording mail delivery by next week. The audit also wrongly concluded that mail arriving late to our processing centers will be delivered late or delayed. This is not true. Mail can arrive at a mail processing center after the acceptance deadline and still be processed and delivered on time. A separate inquiry and investigation mentioned in the article related to a different matter. Please note that while the Postal Service does not discuss employee discipline or personnel decisions, the actions of a very few employees does not reflect on the 640,000 dedicated men and women of the Postal Service. The Postal Service investigates allegations of wrongdoing by its employees and takes corrective action as warranted, based on the facts of each investigation.

**Ecommercebytes:** Walmart acquired Parcel and will use it to provide same-day delivery to customers located in New York City. The service will deliver items from Walmart and Jet, including both general merchandise and fresh and frozen groceries. Parcel has partnerships with several meal kit, grocery and ecommerce companies. Walmart said Parcel will continue servicing its current clients and adding others, operating from its New York City headquarters "where it can accelerate and scale over time."

**CBSNews:** Porch pirates -- thieves who steal packages right off your doorstep -- are a growing problem. Some homeowners have installed security cameras in an effort to protect their deliveries. Amazon is taking things a step further by providing a photo the moment the item is delivered, which could prove especially helpful in some areas. Amazon is rolling out a new program called [AMZL Photo on Delivery](#). After dropping off a package, an Amazon delivery person snaps a photo showing the item on the recipient's property. The customer then gets an email with the photo, confirming the delivery. Amazon customers can opt out of the Photo on Delivery program, but a company spokesperson says its been well-received so far.

**PostalNews:** During the latter part of this week, the House of Representatives will vote on a budget bill (H.Con.Res. 71) that would, in part, require the Oversight and Government Reform Committee to slash postal and federal benefits by at least \$32 billion over the next decade. In addition, the budget bill would move the Postal Service on-budget and recommends enactment of Postal reform legislation like H.R. 756, the Postal Reform Act of 2017. Meanwhile, the Senate Budget Committee will be considering a yet-to-be numbered budget bill that does not include any of these provisions.

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#### **October 2**

**KrebsOnSecurity:** A free new service from the U.S. Postal Service that provides scanned images of incoming mail before it is slated to arrive at its destination address is raising eyebrows among security experts who worry about the service's potential for misuse by private investigators, identity thieves, stalkers or abusive ex-partners. The USPS says it hopes to have changes in place by early next year that could help blunt some of those concerns. A review of the methods used by the USPS to validate new account signups suggests the service is wide open to abuse by a range of parties, mainly because of weak authentication and because it is not easy to opt out of the service. There does not appear to be any limit on the number of people who can sign up for the service at any one address, except that one needs to know the names and KBA question answers for a valid resident of that address. The USPS says businesses are not currently eligible to sign up as recipients of Informed Delivery. However, people running businesses out of their home could also be the target of competitors hoping to steal away customers, or to pose as partner firms in demanding payment for outstanding invoices.

**FederalNewsRadio:** Federal and postal workers this week will learn how much their health premiums will be going up in January. Later this month, retirees will learn the amount of their January cost-of-living adjustment, which could exceed the pending 1.9 percent white-collar federal pay raise. Or not. Many workers and retirees confuse a federal pay raise with a retiree COLA. Many politicians — when giving themselves a pay raise — often refer to it as a COLA, simply a catchup with inflation. But the two are very different. COLAs track changes in the cost of living, whereas pay raises are a political-fiscal decision. President Donald Trump has called for a 1.9 percent January pay raise for nonpostal federal workers. Under the locality pay system, 1.4 percent of that will go to many workers, while an additional 0.5 percent will be granted to workers in places like San Francisco-San Jose, New York City, Washington-Baltimore and other locality pay zones. Uniformed military personnel would get a 2.1 percent raise next year under the Trump budget.

## International News

### October 30

**BORNEO:** [BorneoBulletin](#): The Postal Services Department has continued to experience steady increases in parcel and packet deliveries, recording 490,000 deliveries in year 2016 compared to 2000's figure of 224,000 – a rise of more than 100 per cent. Deliveries of letters have however observed a downward trend, falling 50 per cent from 14.7 million in 2000 to 7.5 million in 2016. The minister also said that it is time for the postal services to be innovative and urged them to look for ways to diversify its services.

**OMAN:** [OmanTribute](#): Oman Post, as part of its diversification strategy and shedding the tag of being just a point for sending and receiving letters, is to launch its e-commerce service in November as part of National Day celebrations. Estimates put e-commerce figures for the Sultanate currently at \$600 million per annum and this is expected to touch \$900 million in 2020, even if there is no new strategy by the public and private sector. Oman Post CEO Abdulmalik Al Balushi told Oman Tribune recently that apart from e-commerce, there would be more product launches in November and still more in 2018. Oman Post is going through a transformation and e-commerce requires cheap deliveries, technology, automation, sorting sensors and upscaling of staff capabilities. "We are already in the process of establishing an automated sorting centre. Its huge capacity of 6,000 items per hour will help the country attract volumes. That project will end by next year. That is at the cornerstone of our strategy. We are strengthening the delivery part, sorting part and extending our arm to digital," he said.

**RUSSIA:** [PRWeb](#): The Russian Post's newly-automated postal logistics center in Kazan officially opened in October 2017 after a rigorous testing phase. [PENETRON technology](#) provided lasting durability for its underlying concrete structures. Russian Post operations have experienced remarkable growth in recent years in the number of imported parcels. Package volumes in 2016 alone increased by 50% over the previous year. This has led to a program of expansion and upgrades for the Russian Post processing centers.

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### October 27

**AZERBAIJAN:** [AzerNews](#): Azerpost, Azerbaijan's government-backed postal service provider, is negotiating with the express mail services of China, South Korea and Singapore for the organization of transit through Azerbaijan of large-sized goods purchased on electronic trading platforms. Based on the previously signed contract between the express mail service (EMS) Azerexpresspost and the mail of Estonia, the EMS mail delivered from Germany to Azerbaijan is redirected to Russia through Azerpost. Azerpost noted that the formation of regional and international transport corridors in the country and the transformation of Baku into a major transport and logistics center have created new opportunities for postal transportation of goods purchased through electronic trading platforms.

**US VIRGIN ISLANDS:** [Viconsortium](#): The U.S. Postal Service will start shipping mail to the territory directly from the U.S. mainland instead of the regular Puerto Rico route, following lobbying from local leaders as thousands of mail headed to the territory have been stuck in Puerto Rico. Some residents have expressed frustration with the long delays in mail since Hurricane Maria affected Puerto Rico, which has directly impacted mail delivery to the territory. Local Postal Service employees have been working abbreviated workweeks following the passage of the storms, with Irma destroying at least one post office in St. Thomas, and Maria ravaging the Frederiksted Post Office on St. Croix. Other post offices were affected as well, but Postal Service officials, recognizing USPS's important role, have worked through kinks to provide service. The regular mailing route through Puerto Rico is expected to resume once the backlog of mail is resolved and delivery issues addressed.

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### October 26

**FINLAND:** [Post&Parcel](#): Finland's Posti has reported that its Parcel and Logistics net sales for the third quarter (Q3) grew to outstrip Postal Services. Overall, the group's net sales increased by 0.7% to €378.6m in Q3, but its adjusted EBITDA drop 5.9% to €22.4m. The combined parcel volume of Finland and the Baltic countries increased by 11%. However, the number of addressed letters decreased by 13% in Finland. Mail items covered by the universal service obligation accounted for 4.3% (3.9%) of all of Posti's mail items.

**UNITED KINGDOM:** [Post&Parcel](#): Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) have officially appointed Professor Lynette Harris to mediate their talks over pay, pensions and other issues. In a statement sent to Post&Parcel today (25 October), Royal Mail said: "We are pleased to be entering a new phase of talks. Our priority is to reach agreement with the CWU. We are committed to using the mediation process to do just that. Moya Greene, CEO, will lead these talks for Royal Mail. "Mediation will bring both parties together, with a third party, to seek the right outcome for employees, customers and the business.

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### October 25

**CHINA:** [EnPeopleCN](#): The market size of China's postal service is approaching 1/5 of the world's total market scale, the country's State Postal Bureau (SPB) reported at a recent press conference. China now has the world's fastest-growing postal business, with the largest potential, and it is the most-appealing place to invest and the most active business in terms of innovation, according to Shen Hongyan, the SPB spokesperson. The service covers more than 300 million people on a daily basis, handling more than 100 billion yuan (\$15.1 billion) in agricultural exports and 120-billion-yuan worth of manufactured goods each year. In addition, it helped deliver more than 4-trillion-yuan (\$ 604.4 billion) worth of online purchases, or 12.5 percent of total retail consumer good sales in 2016 and, helped create 200,000 jobs each year. China accounted for 40% of global express deliveries in 2016, topping the global country list for 3 consecutive years. It has 20,000 express delivery companies with more than 2 million employees in all and the average cost of



courier services dropped by 31% from 5 years ago, to 12.7 yuan (\$1.9) per item. Currently, there are 6 express delivery companies in China that earn over 30 billion yuan annually and 10 companies that earn more than 10 billion yuan annually. In addition, there are 3 airline cargo services in operation with 93 cargo aircraft.

**OMAN:** *MuscatDaily*: Oman Post has become the first public postal entity in the Middle East to launch a new delivery service app called Ersal. For this Oman Post has collaborated with Fetchr, a Dubai-based delivery-business and consumer technology company. It is the first of its kind joint venture, in which the app will enable delivery services based on one's mobile location. The Ersal venture is part of Fetchr's bid to tackle delivery challenges in emerging markets, where streets often lack a formal address. The delivery app uses one's mobile phone as his/her postal address. Business deliveries can be scheduled with a simple tap on the app by booking delivery time slot. Customers can download the app and pinpoint their location on a Google map, allowing Fetchr drivers to rely on GPS to deliver packages.

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#### October 24

**BELGIUM:** *Post&Parcel*: Belgian postal operator Bpost has opened a new flagship sorting center capable of sorting up to 300,000 parcels a day, more than doubling its previous capacity. The sorter utilizes the latest technologies, such as 360° parcel scanning, and is capable of handling oversized items measuring 120 x 70 x 60cm (47 x 28 x 24in). At 80,000m<sup>2</sup> (860,000ft<sup>2</sup>), the New Brussels X sorting center is the biggest in the Benelux and the second biggest in Europe. Based in Neder-Over-Heembeek, north Brussels, the hub will handle letters for the Brussels and Flemish Brabant region, as well as all parcels for the whole country. Overall, the center is capable of handling 2.4 million letters per day. The sorting facility forms the cornerstone of Bpost's Vision 2020 strategy, which aims to centralize parcel sorting in the new hub, organize last-mile delivery around 60 operational mail centers, and fully automate mail sorting at five other sorting centers.

**RUSSIA:** *Post&Parcel*: Russian Post has announced that it handled 208 million international postal items in the first nine months of 2017, a 43% increase over the 145.6 million units handled for the same period in 2016. In response, the post has been gearing up for the peak period by expanding its delivery fleet and increasing the frequency of shipments. In September, Russian Post purchased 45 baggage-mail train carriages produced by Tver Carriage Works, enabling it to run a dedicated service between Moscow and Vladivostok. The post has also increased the frequency of flights to and from China, and is in the process of acquiring 2,500 delivery vehicles, updating more than 15% of its fleet. According to the Association of Internet Trade Companies (AITC), a Russian marketing and trade organization, Russian Post increased its customer confidence in e-commerce deliveries to 67.5% in 2017, a 4.5% increase over the 63% recorded the previous year.

**UNITED KINGDOM:** *Post&Parcel*: UK-based parcel store network CollectPlus has launched a new service which will enable users to send parcels even if they only know the recipient's email address, messenger details or mobile. CollectPlus said that the service would be particularly convenient for online sellers who "use mobile marketplaces to sell items and as a result, don't have the buyers' address details". When "Social Send" is selected, CollectPlus automatically sending the recipient a link which allows them to select a convenient delivery location from any one of the 6,500 parcel points in the CollectPlus network. The sender can then drop off the parcel at their local CollectPlus store. The recipient will be notified when the parcel has reached its destination and is ready to pick up and CollectPlus also provides the sender with proof of delivery. Parcels can be tracked by both parties and they are kept safely for collection at the destination parcel point for up to 10 days. The Social Send service is priced from £4.99, with 3 to 5-day delivery including £50 of transit cover as standard.

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#### October 23

**CANADA:** *GlobalNews*: Toronto is partnering with *UPS* to launch a cargo delivery bicycle pilot project to improve the flow of traffic in the densest parts of the city. Officials said the pilot will begin with just one bicycle conducting deliveries by travelling on roadways. Mayor John Tory said the test vehicle, which carries a large square cargo hitch in the rear, won't be allowed on bicycle lanes. However, the delivery vehicle will be permitted to use designated load-off zones on certain city streets. UPS officials said the pilot project, which was first launched in Hamburg, Germany in 2012, is part of the company's plan towards a more sustainable city.

**DENMARK:** *Post&Parcel*: PostNord has reported that it has secured funding of SEK 2.2bn for the transformation of its Danish operations. The funding has been secured following an agreement signed today (20 October) between PostNord and the Swedish and Danish states. The agreement will result in SEK 1,533m being provided by the Danish state, which constitutes a payment for ensuring the universal postal service. SEK 267m constitutes an equity contribution from the Danish state and SEK 400m constitutes an equity contribution from the Swedish state.

**NIGERIA:** *DailyTrust*: Many pundits figuratively announced the obituary of the Nigerian postal service when the internet first became a commonplace in the country about 15 years ago. Perhaps there is no sector that has been so challenged by the internet revolution as much as the postal sector of our economy. But all is not lost as the Federal Government is presently making moves to transform the postal agency into a revenue generating 'machine'. The Minister of Communications Adebayo Shittu said in an interview recently that the agency would be able to garner huge revenue annually if the current reforms at the agency were successfully carried out. The agency, he said, was looking at N200billion annual revenue from new services it recently launched. He listed electronics stamps, money order, postal improved courier services, agency banking, e-commerce, and real estate services as some of the new services that would be generating billions of naira to FG's coffers every year.

**SAUDI ARABIA:** *Menafn*: As part of a privatization process he indicated could take several years, the head of Saudi Arabia's government-owned postal service said on Wednesday the institution was setting up new distribution centers. As part of wider economic reforms aimed at boosting efficiency and easing pressure on state finances in an era of cheap oil, the kingdom is launching a privatization drive in many sectors. Saudi Postal Corp, which has more than 10,000 employees, sent a request for proposals to local

banks in January. Telecommunications minister Mohammed al-Suwaiyal last year said that its privatization was likely to start by early 2017.

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** *Wam:* The UAE has been ranked first among Arab countries in terms of quality and performance of postal services. Chairman of Emirates Post Group, Mohammed Sultan Al Qadi, said that the UAE's top regional ranking on the Integrated Index for Postal Development, ZIPD, is a great achievement, and constitutes a new element on the postal policy map for the future, according to the global perspective. Emirates Post is able to contribute and participate strongly and effectively in the development of postal services locally and abroad, he added.

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#### October 20

**EUROPEAN UNION:** *Post&Parcel:* Major European cities will need a "huge increase" in urban logistics space to cope with the expected growth in e-commerce-driven parcel volumes over the next few years, according to a new report from property company Cushman & Wakefield. The *Urban Logistics report*, published yesterday (18 October), forecasts a 69% increase in parcel volume in Europe by 2021. According to Cushman & Wakefield: "In terms of population and buying power, London is the largest and most mature eCommerce market in Europe with a current urban logistics space requirement of 870,000 sq m. This total is expected to exceed 1.2 million sq m in 2021, an increase of 42%."

**INDIA:** *TheHindu:* With consumers making more online purchases during the festival season, the Postal Department saw a jump in the e-commerce packets it handled in the western region this year. According to data available with the department, between October 1 and 18, as many as 17,721 parcels were handled in this region, registering postal revenue of ₹19.13 lakh for orders delivered within the country. An official with the department in Coimbatore said that Amazon continued to have the largest volume with more than 5,000 parcels. What came as a boost this year was the use of speed post by a couple of local retailers to deliver parcels purchased by customers online.

**NETHERLANDS:** *Post&Parcel:* PostNord has reported that it has secured funding of SEK 2.2bn for the transformation of its Danish operations. The funding has been secured following an agreement signed today (20 October) between PostNord and the Swedish and Danish states. The agreement will result in SEK 1,533m being provided by the Danish state, which constitutes a payment for ensuring the universal postal service. SEK 267m constitutes an equity contribution from the Danish state and SEK 400m constitutes an equity contribution from the Swedish state.

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** *Zawya:* The e-commerce sector represents the greatest growth potential for postal services in the coming five years, the acting CEO of Emirates Post Group said. In an interview, Abdullah Mohammad Al Ashram told Gulf News that the "last-mile delivery of goods" purchased online is a key focus area of an increasingly diversified portfolio of Emirates Post. His comments came during a discussion of the 2017-2020 strategy of the UAE postal service, focusing on challenges and opportunities in the market. The worldwide decline in letters and documents posted through traditional mail, caused by the proliferation of digital communication, has created both obstacles and prospects for postal administrations, Al Ashram said. Online stores and apps have also replaced many physical markets.

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#### October 19

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** *GulfNews:* The e-commerce sector represents the greatest growth potential for postal services in the coming five years, the acting CEO of Emirates Post Group said. In an interview, Abdullah Mohammad Al Ashram told Gulf News that the "last-mile delivery of goods" purchased online is a key focus area of an increasingly diversified portfolio of Emirates Post. The worldwide decline in letters and documents posted through traditional mail, caused by the proliferation of digital communication, has created both obstacles and prospects for postal administrations, Al Ashram said. Online stores and apps have also replaced many physical markets.

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#### October 18

**CHINA:** *Post&Parcel:* Global parcel delivery and logistics provider UPS has substantially upped its investment in the Chinese market by enhancing its services across 20 cities. The investment comes at a time of renewed vigor in the Chinese economy with exports projected to top US\$2.5tn in 2018. By boosting its resources in the country, UPS aims to extend package pick-up and drop-off times by up to 1.5 hours; provide faster transit times for shipments heading to the USA, Europe and Asia, with most US and intra-Asia shipments now reaching their destination within 24 hours; offer more value-added services such as same-day pick-up, customs brokerage and warehouse management solutions; and overall, to provide more convenient access to the UPS network in China across 33 cities.

**IRELAND:** *Post&Parcel:* An Post has launched ReturnPal, a new, easy-to-use service to return unwanted goods to any online retailer in Ireland or the UK. Like most places, the burden of returning goods to retailers remains an issue for Irish shoppers, with just one in four Irish adults (24%) saying they will always return goods that they are not 100% satisfied with. In response, An Post has launched the ReturnPal app, which is now available on the Apple Store and Google Play Store, and offers a hassle-free way for consumers in Ireland to return unwanted or unsuitable online purchases. With ReturnPal, online shoppers can then have their unsuitable or unwanted goods collected by An Post from an address of their choosing and returned directly to the retailer from which the goods came.

**SAUDI ARABIA:** *Reuters:* The head of Saudi Arabia's government-owned postal service said on Wednesday the institution was setting up new distribution centres as part of a privatisation process he indicated could take several years. The kingdom is launching a privatisation drive in many sectors as part of wider economic reforms aimed at boosting efficiency and easing pressure on state finances in an era of cheap oil. Saudi Postal Corp, which has more than 10,000 employees, sent a request for proposals to local banks in January. Telecommunications minister Mohammed al-Suwaiyal last year said that its privatisation was likely to start by early 2017.

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: [Post&Parcel](#):** In recent trials using the what3words addressing system, UAE-based logistics and delivery firm Aramex found that delivery times improved by 42% and that the total distance traveled by drivers was also reduced by 22%. What3words is a global addressing system that has divided the world into 3x3m (10x10ft) squares, each with a unique address made of three words. The three-word address index.home.raft, for example, identifies the front entrance of the what3words office in London, UK. Three-word addresses are accurate to 3x3m (10x10ft), giving every front door, mall entrance and delivery point its own unique address. The drivers who used street addresses spent seven hours and 49 minutes on the road, drove a total distance of 255km (158 miles), and had to make 25 phone calls asking for directions. The drivers who used three-word addresses drove for four hours and 28 minutes, covered a distance of 198km (123 miles), and made no phone calls to customers. Over 100 deliveries, the three-word address drivers were 42% faster than the street address drivers. There was a 22% reduction in total distance traveled because what3words enables optimized route navigation.

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#### October 17

**NETHERLANDS: [DutchNews](#):** Mail firm Sandd has started delivering letters this week, ending a monopoly on domestic postal services that dates back two centuries. Sandd is issuing its own stamps, priced at 60 cents compared to PostNL's rate of 78 cents. However, customers will not be able to post Sandd-stamped envelopes in the orange PostNL letter boxes. Instead they will have to use a DHL service point, not all of which are set up to carry Sandd letters. Sandd said the twice-weekly service is designed for non-urgent mail. The company delivers letters on Tuesdays and Fridays, while PostNL has five deliveries a week from Tuesday to Saturday.

**NETHERLANDS: [Post&Parcel](#):** PostNL and the trade unions Bond van Post Personeel (BVPP), CNV Publieke Diensten and VHP2 have reached agreements in principle regarding the PostNL collective labour agreement (CLA) and the CLA for Saturday deliverers. The new PostNL CLA will apply from 1 April 2017 to and including 31 December 2018. In addition to the salary increase of 2.6% in total, it has been agreed that every full time employee will be paid a one-time compensation of 50 euros net in December 2017. Part time employees will receive a minimum of 25 euros net. It has also been agreed to further stimulate mobility within PostNL. For Saturday deliverers the same duration and salary increase have been agreed.

**SWITZERLAND: [Post&Parcel](#):** Swiss Post has announced that it plans to extend its tests using Starship Technology delivery robots. In a [statement](#) issued on Friday (13 October), Swiss Post said it now intends to test the robots for "further logistics tasks at additional locations over the coming months". The next test will take place in Dübendorf and is expected to last one year. Swiss Post said that "potential applications" could include "food deliveries, sending medical products and same-day delivery of special items".

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#### October 15

**IRELAND: [LeitrimObserver](#):** An Post has announced that all post offices across the country will close at 12pm today as a result of Storm Ophelia while postal deliveries have already been heavily disrupted in many areas. A statement released by An Post stated, "National post office network will close all offices from midday #StormOphelia some offices already disrupted as storm nears."

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#### October 13

**NIGERIA: [PremiumTimes](#):** The district manager of the Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST), Ilorin, Godwill Magulike, said on Friday that the agency would soon introduce banking services in its operation. Mr. Magulike told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Ilorin that the agency's banking services would enable Nigerians to send money across the country and beyond, thereby complimenting its courier services. He said that NIPOST had earlier introduced other products aimed at reviving the postal system, serving the people better and increasing patronage. He listed the products as money order, electronic stamps and address verification, among others.

**UNITED KINGDOM: [DrapersOnline](#):** A national postal strike at Royal Mail due to go ahead next week has been called off. A High Court judge has ruled the strike illegal after Royal Mail bosses argued it could not go ahead unless the Communications Workers Union (CWU) first followed contractual dispute resolution. The Royal Mail said the dispute resolution process could go on until Christmas. The CWU voted in favour of strike action at the beginning of this month in an ongoing row over pensions, pay, working hours and job security.

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#### October 12

**UNITED KINGDOM: [MetroCoUK](#):** The Royal Mail has won a High Court injunction preventing next week's 48-hour strike by postal workers. Members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) were set to walk out from October 19 after voting massively in favour of industrial action in a long-running row over pensions, pay and jobs. The strike would have been the first national walkout since Royal Mail was privatised four years ago. Royal Mail says that CWU is in breach of its contractual obligation not to call for strike action until the external mediation process, which began on October 5, is exhausted. It claims that an injunction is appropriate to prevent the deliberate inconveniencing of hundreds of thousands of people across the UK, as well as commercial loss to the company. The union maintains it has been attempting to find a solution to the dispute for 18 months.

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#### October 11

**UKRAINE: [UKRInform](#):** President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has signed a decree to approve international regulations on postal services. The relevant decree has been published on the president's official website. "To approve the Universal Postal Convention, the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union, the Final Protocol of the Universal Postal Convention, the Postal Payment Services Agreement signed on behalf of Ukraine on October 11, 2012 in Doha," reads the document. The decree was signed on October 10, 2017.

**UNITED KINGDOM:** [Reuters](#): Britain's Communications Workers Union (CWU) said it would defend its position at London's Royal Courts of Justice on Oct. 12, after Royal Mail sought an injunction to prevent union members from striking later this month. CWU and Royal Mail have been embroiled in a dispute over the British postal company's plans to replace its defined benefit pension scheme, a move intended to prevent its annual contributions from ballooning to over 1 billion pounds by 2018. Around 90,000 Royal Mail workers are in the plan, whose closure to new members in 2008 resulted in about 40,000 workers joining a less generous defined contribution plan. Royal Mail responded by saying it would use all legal options at its disposal to halt the strike. The group on Monday sought a High Court injunction so that the contractual external mediation process could be followed.

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#### October 10

**CHINA:** [ChinaDaily](#): China will strengthen its fast-growing postal industry, an official said on the 48th World Post Day on Monday. The industry, mainly postal and courier services, has seen revenue increase 2.7 times since 2012, and the courier sector has been the world's largest in terms of delivery volume for three years, said Ma Junsheng, head of the State Post Bureau (SPB). However, the industry is still facing problems in many fields, including delivery channel safety, vehicles and employee interests, Ma said. To make the industry stronger, the bureau expects postal and courier companies to expand personalized, professional and one-stop services, Ma said. SPB will encourage companies to become comprehensive logistical operators and increase their presence overseas, he added. According to the ZIPD index, the relatively higher overall performance of the UAE is driven by better quality of service. It ensures delivery within one day for most of its domestic and inbound postal shipments, making it the fastest postal delivery service in the world.

**KENYA:** [CoastWeek](#): Kenya will soon roll out a national address system to facilitate faster linkages between traders and consumers in the postal sector, a senior government official said on Monday. Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Technology Joe Mucheru said that in order to remain relevant, it is imperative for the postal industry to innovate and create new products in order to secure a strong future. National address system is a framework that provides for, among others, the naming and numbering of streets and properties and coding to facilitate easy identification and location of such places on the ground. It also involves the development of digitized maps for use in the management of settlements and urban communities that Postal Corporation of Kenya intends to use to recoup the dwindling fortunes it lost to private courier players in the recent past.

**OMAN:** [TimesofOman](#): A unified postal system will soon come to Oman, according to the Muscat Municipality's members. Ali bin Abdulredha bin Dawood Al Hashmani, a member of the Municipal Council and a representative of Muttrah, said: "In a recent Municipal Council meeting, the National Centre for Statistics and Information submitted the National Infrastructure for Geographic Information Project, which talked in detail about the Sultanate's unified address system, which is going to be used in the census of 2020." He added that the process of implementing the system will happen in four stages, beginning with its preparation, then making the unified addressing system database, followed by a field implementation of the addressing system and lastly activating of the address of the buildings.

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES:** [TradeArab](#): The UAE has been ranked as region's first and featured among the world's regional champions in the Integrated Index for Postal Development (ZIPD) for 2017, which was released by the Universal Postal Union (UPU). "This year's global top three; Switzerland, France and Japan and the regional champions; Brazil, Mauritius, Poland, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, deserve to be congratulated on their outstanding performance," Bishar A Hussein, UPU director general, was quoted as saying by Wam, the Emirates official news agency.

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#### October 9

**BELGIUM:** [Reuters](#): Bpost, Belgium's national postal deliverer, said on Monday it has agreed to buy Radial, the U.S.-based distribution center operator, for \$820 million in cash and debt. The move is intended to give Bpost a major boost in its speed and reach in delivering packages ordered online, the major growth area in the postal industry. Radial, owned by Sterling Partners, was created by merging eBay's former operations services division with U.S. firm Innotrac in 2016.

**BRAZIL:** [Tamebay](#): Since mid September there have been delays with mail destined for Brazil following reports of widespread industrial action in the country. Originally Royal Mail advised that there could be delays of at least 10 days from posting to delivery, but we've now heard via UKP Worldwide that due to a large backlog at the Post Office, it has been advised that no further cargo is able to be accepted due to lack of room.

**INDIA:** [EconomicTimes](#): India Post launched an international tracked packet service for the Asia Pacific region using which businesses and individuals will be able to send shipments overseas. "This new service has many features like affordable price, track and trace, volume discounts, pick up facility, compensation for loss or damage, and is therefore high value for money," said Manoj Sinha, minister of telecom, which includes postal services. The department will initially make this service available in 12 countries, which will later be extended to more countries. The services will benefit from the increasing business coming from ecommerce, which will translate into more revenue.

**SINGAPORE:** [TodayOnline](#): Riding on Singapore's smart nation drive, SingPost launched a slew of new initiatives and services that offered a glimpse at the future of the post office. At the launch of its new flagship General Post Office (GPO) and SingPost Centre at Paya Lebar on Monday (Oct 9), the country's biggest player in the traditional postal industry also unveiled its first Smart Post Office where facilities and services are "future-ready". The new services include features such as the digitalisation of its 24-hour self-service SAM payment machines, where services such as stamp purchases and bill payments are now available on web and mobile app. The SAM kiosks have also been upgraded with new touch screens, new capabilities and payment modes. Even the customer service stations have been upgraded to utilise technologies such as radio frequency identification (RFID), near field communication, and electronic notifications.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *Independent*:** Royal Mail has said that it will lodge an application with the High Court for an injunction to prevent a 48-strike from happening, in a dispute over pensions and pay. Members of the Communication Workers Union are due to walk out on 19 October at 11am after voting in favour of a strike. On Monday, Royal Mail in a statement said that it had written to the CWU, invoking a “legally-binding external mediation process” and calling the prospect of industrial action unlawful. The CWU was given a deadline of noon on Monday to withdraw its strike threat, but did not meet it.

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#### October 7

**CANADA: *MTLBlog*:** Canada Post, the Canadian crown corporation that is the nation’s main postal service, has said it will start delivering marijuana after legalization. The announcement was made at a conference in Montreal yesterday, with a representative from Canada Post saying the company will deliver cannabis to Canadian homes. A director of strategy and e-commerce mentioned that Canada Post already delivers a controlled substance (alcohol) for the SAQ and LCBO, so the company is equipped to handle marijuana.

**JAPAN: *JapanToday*:** Transport and postal businesses had the highest number of workers recognized to have suffered from brain and heart disorders including death by overwork, the government said in a white paper. The transport and mailing businesses comprised about 30 percent of the total cases between 2010 and 2015 with 464 workers affected followed by the wholesale and retail businesses with 229. The manufacturing industry ranked top in terms of work-related mental disorders at 349, according to the white paper. The white paper mentioned initiatives taken by the government and businesses to overhaul working styles such as limiting extra working hours.

**PAKISTAN: *PakObserver*:** Federal Minister for Postal Service Maulana Ameer Zaman on Friday said that all out efforts were being made to modernize the postal service system across the country. Talking to media, he said a summary for budget had been sent to concerned department so that better facilities could be provided to the customers in a proper manner. The postal service department was providing the salaries to the employees from its own resources. To a question he said the funds would be required to purchase missing facilities like vehicles for proper transfer of goods to different areas of the country. Proper attention was not given to this department in the past, he said. “We have taken the steps to bring improvement in the money transfer system and goods to other areas of the country,” he said.

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#### October 6

**CUBA: *DailyMail*:** Direct postal service between Cuba and the United States, which had resumed last year after a 48-year break, has been suspended since March, a Cuban official disclosed Friday. Soraya Bravo, vice president of the Cuban postal system, disclosed the months-long interruption in direct mail service in comments to local media. She said mail to and from the United States was still being routed through third countries, and that the volume has dropped by 47 percent so far this year. "We are waiting for a response from the (US) postal authorities to be able to reactivate direct mail service through regular commercial flights, which is the usual practice worldwide," she said. The two countries had renewed direct mail service in March 2016 as part of a thaw in relations under former US president Barack Obama.

**NIGERIA: *PMNewsNigeria*:** Telecom stakeholders have urged the Nigerian Post Service (NIPOST) to come up with innovative ways to market its products. They also urged the Federal Government to mandate Ministries, Agencies and Parastatals (MDAs) to utilise the facilities of the NIPOST to make it more viable. The stakeholders made the call in separate interviews with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Friday in Abuja as Nigeria joins the world to celebrate the World Post Day on Oct. 9. Mr Smart Tweador, who is the Chief Executive of Smart Connects, a telecom company, said it was expedient for government agencies to patronage NIPOST to as it was planning to reform the organisation.

**SWEDEN: *TheLocal*:** Under Sweden's current law, 85 percent of letters should reach the recipient within one working day, but if a proposal is confirmed, the majority of letters would take two days to arrive instead. The increased delivery time is part of a delayed proposal for a new law regulating post which will be presented to parliament soon, Sweden's *Expressen* reported. Under the proposed law, the postal service would have two days to deliver 90 percent of first class mail. Mail will still be delivered every weekday, thanks to a European Postal Directive under which all EU citizens have the right to receive their post five days a week. The only exception to this rule is extremely isolated areas, such as in remote parts of Norrland's or Sweden's archipelago islands. The reason for the change is a significant reduction in the amount of mail sent in Sweden, which means a reduced income for the postal service.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *HeraldScotland*:** Royal Mail is to take legal action against the union representing postal workers if it does not withdraw its notice of a 48-hour strike by Monday. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) is planning a walkout of 110,000 of its members from October 19 in a bitter dispute over pensions, pay and jobs. Union members voted massively in favour of industrial action in a ballot. Royal Mail said it has written to the CWU invoking a “legally-binding” external mediation process. A statement said: “Royal Mail requested that CWU withdraw its notification of industrial action and commit to following the dispute resolution procedures.

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#### October 5

**TAIWAN: *TaipeiTimes*:** Chunghwa Post’s board of directors is expected to approve a proposed 3 percent salary increase at the end of this month, though entry-level employees are requesting a raise of between 5 percent and 10 percent. Chunghwa Post president Chen Shian-juh said that while a comprehensive pay raise of at least a 3 percent is expected, whether the board would agree to giving entry-level employees a raise of 5 percent or more is unknown. Entry-level employees at the postal company have lower salaries than those at other state-run companies, Chen said, adding that the salaries of entry-level employees still have room to improve even though they have been raised twice.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *Express*:** Members of the Communication Workers Union will walk out at noon on October 19 after voting massively in favour of taking industrial action. General secretary Dave Ward said: "This is a watershed dispute that will determine not only our members' pensions, jobs and pay but also the future of the service. "Postal workers delivered a massive Yes vote for strike action and we are determined to take whatever steps are necessary to deliver an agreement that will protect and enhance our members' terms and conditions and improve the range of services on offer to customers. "As well as this call to action, the CWU will now launch a major campaign to gain public and political support for postal workers.

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#### **October 4**

**BELGIUM: *Post&Parcel*:** bpost has revealed plans to expand the Cubee network to have more than 450 parcel lockers in Belgium by the end of 2018. The Belgian postal operator joined forces with the Dutch company de Buren last year to develop Cubee, which is focused on developing an independent, open network of parcel lockers for retailers, online customers and couriers. Emphasising the network's open nature, bpost said: "A parcel from any logistics partner can be delivered to a Cubee parcel locker. In addition to bpost, Cubee today reached an agreement with DPD and GLS, among others. The open character of the network is the biggest differentiating factor compared to the former bpost parcel lockers."

**GERMANY: *Reuters*:** Postal workers in the western German town of Bad Hersfeld are getting a helping hand from a new colleague. A bright yellow, four-wheeled robot will carry mail and packages and follow them as they do their rounds. The scheme is being tried by German postal and logistics company Deutsche Post DHL, which says the custom-built "PostBOT" can carry loads of up to 150 kilograms and can navigate around obstacles. With the rise of online shopping, postal workers are having to handle ever-heavier packages. The robot, which can carry up to six post trays, uses sensors to track the legs of the postal worker and can be used in all weather conditions, the company said.

**LUXEMBOURG: *Post&Parcel*:** European Commission has concluded that Luxembourg granted undue tax benefits to Amazon of around €250m. In a *statement* issued today (4 October), the EC Commissioner in charge of competition policy, Margrethe Vestager, said: "Luxembourg gave illegal tax benefits to Amazon. As a result, almost three quarters of Amazon's profits were not taxed. In other words, Amazon was allowed to pay four times less tax than other local companies subject to the same national tax rules. This is illegal under EU State aid rules. Member States cannot give selective tax benefits to multinational groups that are not available to others." The EC ruling and investigation centred on a tax ruling issued by Luxembourg in 2003, and prolonged in 2011, which the EC claimed "lowered the tax paid by Amazon in Luxembourg without any valid justification".

**NIGERIA: *Vanguard*:** The Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) says it will inaugurate an online Postal and Money Order as part of activities to commemorate the World Post Day coming up on Oct. 9. According to a statement by Mr Franklin Alao, the General Manager, Corporate Communications of NIPOST in Abuja, portal is aimed at bringing postal service at par with best global practices. Alao said that the online postal and money order alongside other products were slated to be inaugurated at the event, which signalled a number of events lined up by the organisation to re-launch itself back into the public consciousness.

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#### **October 3**

**UNITED KINGDOM: *FT*:** By voting for strike action at Royal Mail — the first since 2009 — CWU members are seeking to protect pay and benefits. Royal Mail argues that the old scheme is unaffordable, because its annual contributions would have to rise from £400m normally to £1bn next year, and it does not have the free cash flow to fund that. In fact, even the CWU's own staff pension schemes are facing a scaling back of benefits, as their costs have spiralled, leaving them in deficit. Earlier this year, a CWU document admitted that its schemes were "no longer sustainable". Part of the problem is that, as letter volumes have declined, so has the workforce and the union membership. Strike action may only exacerbate this trend, however. Given the competition now provided by gig economy groups, analysts warn that customers can easily transfer their business to rivals — threatening more Royal Mail jobs. Nor is this an imagined or politicised threat

**UNITED KINGDOM: *FT*:** Workers at Royal Mail have voted for the first national strike at the postal operator since its privatisation, in a move that threatens to disrupt the company's letter and parcel deliveries during the key pre-Christmas period. Almost three-quarters of the 110,000 members of the Communication Workers Union who work at Royal Mail took part in the strike ballot, which was sparked by the company's plans to close its defined benefit pension scheme. Ninety per cent of those who voted supported strike action. CWU officials will meet later this week to determine the next steps in their campaign, including potential strike dates.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *Standard*:** Royal Mail workers are on the verge of an historic strike in a huge row over pensions that threatens to jeopardise attempts to modernise the company. The Communication Workers Union was on Tuesday poised to announce that 110,000 members had voted for industrial action over Christmas – the first since the Royal Mail was privatised four years ago. Union watchers see the case as the first major test of the Government's controversial Trade Union Act, which requires strike ballots to have a 50% turnout. An analysis of the CWU's own finances however suggests it might struggle to fund a strike for very long.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *LondonLoveBusiness*:** LondonMetric Property Plc has announced that it has exchanged on the sale of a Royal Mail distribution warehouse in Daventry to Tritax Big Box REIT plc for £48.8 million, reflecting a NIY of 5.0 per cent. LondonMetric acquired the bespoke 272,000 sq ft warehouse in 2014 for £36.0 million, reflecting a NIY of 6.7 per cent. It generates income of £2.6 million pa and has an unexpired lease term of 6 years. The property has generated a profit on cost of 31 per cent and has been sold at marginally above book value.

**UNITED KINGDOM: *Baltic-Course*:** Jersey Post, the postal company of Jersey, U.K., announced it will embark on a joint venture with the Estonian company Freselle Logistics OU in a new company called GTS Post, reports LETA/BNS. *GTS Post* will provide international, cross-border postal and logistics services, including standard mail delivery, registered, tracked, tracked and signed, and

Express Mail Services (EMS) to both retail and business customers in the Baltic countries and Central and Eastern Europe. It will also provide *Jersey Post's* existing customers improved services into this region and Russia.

**UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION: UN:** The benefits of digitalization to people's lives are enormous, but 'winner-takes-all' dynamics in the digital economy creates a risk of widening income inequalities, says a report released today by a United Nations entity dealing with trade, investment and development. The report acknowledges that information and communications technologies (ICT), electronic commerce and other digital applications are helping a growing number of small businesses and entrepreneurs in developing countries to connect with global markets and open up new ways of generating income. In countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, where the digital economy has evolved the most, growing use of ICT has been accompanied by an increasing income gap between the rich and poor. The report also states that the policy challenge depends on countries' readiness to engage in and benefit from the digital economy, with the least developed countries the least prepared. To ensure that more people and enterprises in developing countries have the capacity to participate effectively, the international community will need to expand its support.

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### **October 2**

**IRELAND: Independent:** Around 300 postmasters gathered at a union meeting to turn down an agreement for new contracts with An Post amid fears up to 400 post offices could close across the country. There were heated scenes at the Sheraton Hotel in Athlone at the Irish Postmasters' Union (IPU) general meeting, as postmasters, staff and their families, gathered to discuss the crisis affecting the postal network. Last week, the Irish Independent reported that the IPU had told its members in a letter that the company had prepared a "blueprint" that would mean the closure of 400 post offices.

**NETHERLANDS: Post&Parcel:** PostNL has announced its new postal rates that will come into effect on 1 January 2018. The new standard rate for domestic letters is €0.83. The new rate for using a franking machine is €0.77. The new standard rate for international letters is €1.40. Meanwhile, PostNL also announced deals of this year's Christmas stamps: "The price of the special postage stamp for Christmas holiday's greetings is 5 euro cents lower than a normal stamp. The special December stamps, in sheets of 20 stamps, will become available as from 20 November 2017. The price of one December stamp is €0.73."

**SINGAPORE: TheMotleyFool:** In early August, Singapore Post Limited released its earnings for the first quarter of its fiscal year ending 31 March 2018 (FY17/18). The reporting period is from 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017. Singapore Post organises its business into three operational segments: Postal, Logistics, and eCommerce. We can see that the Postal business's operating profit declined despite revenue growing by 9%. In short, operating profit for the Postal segment declined because of lower domestic mail volume, which offset growth in cross-border eCommerce-related deliveries.

**SWITZERLAND: Post&Parcel:** Mercedes-Benz Vans has teamed up with the drone systems developer Matternet and online marketplace siroop to launch a pilot project which will test the use of a van and drone-based system to deliver e-commerce goods in Zurich. In a [statement](#) issued yesterday (28 September), Mercedes said that the pilot project, which began on Monday (25 September), is "the first time that extensive beyond-line-of sight drone operations with the use of vans as landing platforms are taking place in a major urban area to test a fully-automated e-commerce drone network". The trials will run for three weeks. Customers will be able to goods weighing up to 2kg from the siroop website for same day delivery.

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